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Dissertation

On

Idiopathic Dyspepsia

for

the Degree of Doctor of Medicine

by

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of

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Preface. —

The subject of the following Dissertation is Dyspepsia, or disordered Digestion. It is one, that might be treated of to a considerable length, but, as I cannot from existing circumstances, presume to lay any claim to originality, I prefer treating of it as concisely, as is consistent with the nature of the subject. Although the works of Bullen and Thomas have not been neglected, I am indebted chiefly for my information on the subject, to the lectures of Professor Chapman, and the treatise on indigestion by Wilson Philip. These Authors being less fallible than commonly falls to the lot of humanity, I may presume, with some confidence, that the following essay will serve as a passport to that degree, which is its ultimate, and only end. —





## Idiopathic Dyspepsia.

To the luxuries and refinements of civilisation, we are indebted for many diseases which make inroads upon human happiness, among which, not the least prominent is Dyspepsia. Associating itself with the sedentary and studious, the indolent and luxurious, Man in his native simplicity, seems not to be the object of its attack, contenting himself with the necessaries of life, which are few, and even when scattered around him, do every body there is amused a penalty, and in the brightest cup of pleasure, mingle many bitter drops of Misery.

Dyspepsia usually commences with sense of oppression after eating, which



is soon followed by nausea, and sometimes vomiting, by sour eructations, which are generally by carbonated, by acrid, by flatulence, and by distention of the stomach and bowels. The nausea is also frequently followed by a sense of constriction about the throat. There is now furrowed tongue, loss of appetite, foetid breath, constipation, paleness of the countenance, small pulse, and disturbed sleep. Very frequently the appetite is vitiated, and unnatural articles are demanded; such as unripe fruit, ashes, chalk, and a variety of improper substances. It sometimes happens, however, that the appetite remains unimpaired, and the assimilating function performed pretty well.

The mind, at length, participates in the



disease, the temper becomes exceedingly ir-  
 ritable, the mind by fits loses its accu-  
 stomed energy, the ideas become confused, and  
 the patient, at length, finds it difficult to  
 command his attention. His sleep is dis-  
 turbed by perplexing dreams, and some-  
 times by fits of Nightmare. At length,  
 he becomes despondent, and sometimes by-  
 pochondriack.

As the disease advances, several very  
 troublesome and painful symptoms arise,  
 which considerably aggravate the misery  
 of the patient. These are Epistaxis, hæ-  
 mialgia, gastrodynia, rich head aches,  
and palpitations of the heart. The  
 whole of these symptoms, may appear  
 in the progress of the same case, but it  
 is rather an unrequent occurrence.  
 The bowels become disturbed, Diarrhoea



alternates with Constipation, and the Discharges assumes various appearances. Sometimes they are yellow, green, blue, or black; but generally, they are of a light hue, and of a firm consistence, indicating the absence of bile. Sometimes the injecta are discharged, with little, or no alteration.

The Urine, is, for the most part, copious and pellucid; though sometimes, it is covered with an oily film, which has been attributed to an imperfect state of the assimilating function.

In the progress of the disease, the patient is tormented with a variety of sympathetic symptoms; such as, pain in the breast, sides, (more frequently of the left than right) or head, derangement of the functions of hearing, seeing, smelling and





tasting, tenderness of the scalp, *The Douleur*, *Douloureux*, *Myetonia*, *Tetanus*, affections of the voice, temporary loss of power in the limbs, numbness, and an endless variety of affections, in almost every part of the body.

The skin, in protracted cases becomes dry, and shrivelled, the surface cold, the hair parched, and inclined to stand on end, the patient hanging about the fire, and experiencing frequent fits of shivering.

The skin is sometimes affected with a troublesome itching, and eruptions, not unfrequently take place. These are the symptoms, which constitute, what properly may be called, the first stage of *Idiosyncratic Dyspepsia*. They have had given to them, the appellation of *Nervous*.

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The first of these is the  
fact that the human mind  
is not a blank slate at birth  
but is filled with ideas and  
feelings which are the result  
of the influence of the  
environment. This is the  
second point. The third  
point is that the human  
mind is not a passive  
receptacle for ideas but  
is an active agent in the  
process of learning. The  
fourth point is that the  
human mind is not a  
single entity but is  
composed of many  
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work together to form  
the whole. The fifth point  
is that the human mind  
is not a static entity but  
is constantly changing  
and growing. The sixth  
point is that the human  
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is that the human mind  
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is that the human mind  
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the whole.

The disease if not arrested, assumes a new appearance, and a train of symptoms arise, which stand as the definition of the second stage of this disease.

The vascular system now becomes disturbed, and the disease exhibits itself, with a strongly marked inflammatory character. The pulse becomes hard, quick, and corded, the skin parched, and dry, the thirst increases, hectic flushes supervene, together with a burning sensation in the palms of the hand, and soles of the feet, a clean polished tongue, a sensation of fullness in the Epigastric, and Hypochondriac regions, with a considerable degree of tenderness on pressure. The urine deposits a latitious sediment, and the bowels remain irregular. The sympathetic affections now become of an inflam-



matory character, constituting Hepatitis, pulmonary consumption, or some other disease. These, of course, become entirely independent of the original disease, and, in fact, sometimes supplant it.

Causes - The causes of Idiopathic Dyspepsia, are those which act directly on the stomach; and secondly, those which act indirectly, through the medium of other parts. Among the former, may be enumerated. 1. Certain Narcotic and improprio articles, such as, opium, tobacco, strong tea or coffee, ardent spirits, bitters, vinegar, strong peppers, and aromatics. 2. The frequent, and long continued use, of any medicine, and particularly Nitre. 3. Exclusive vegetable diet, particularly that of a flatulent kind. 4. Drinking large quantities of warm or cold



fluids. 5. The too frequent use of Emul-  
sions. 6. Immoderate repulsion of stomach,  
from eating or drinking.

Among the second class of causes, or those  
which act indirectly on the stomach,  
may be mentioned 1. Indolent and sed-  
entary habits. 2. Excessive application  
to study. 3. Excess in venery. 4. Fre-  
quent intoxication; which partly belongs  
to the former class, and partly to this.

5. Exposure to cold and moist atmosphere  
without exercise; cold feet are particu-  
larly injurious. 6. Excitation of mind, from  
grief, or the indulgence of vehement and  
disorderly passions.

Post mortem examinations exhibit va-  
rious appearances. The stomach is usu-  
ally flabby and relaxed; sometimes, there  
is an alteration in the structure of the





tissues, and in the small glands of the mucous coat; and if the case be allowed to the second stage, a species of chronic inflammation. Scherries of the pylorus, and ulceration of the coats of the stomach, sometimes occur; but it is much more frequent by the ear, that the sympathetically affected organs (such as the Liver, Spleen, &c) become disorganised. —

Pathology — From the preceding history, it will not be difficult, to understand the nature of Dyspepsia. The first morbid process in the establishment of the disease, is Nervous irritation. From this derangement of the nerves, the secretion of the gastric liquor must be impaired, and the muscular fibres of the stomach affected. In consequence of the former, we have sour eructations, flatulences,

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and distention from the food not being properly acted on, and of the latter, the sense of weight and oppression at the Epigastrium region, together with nausea, as a consequence of the food not being propelled into the Antrum. The loss of these two functions, necessarily increases this nervous irritation, which, continuing for some time, debility of the capillaries ensues, producing congestion, which terminates in inflammation. Hence the tenderness of the Epigastrium, and all the febrile symptoms, connected with the second stage of Dyspepsia.

Prognosis - Our opinions as to the termination of this disease, must be founded upon the stage of the disease, the soundness of the constitution, the habits of the patient, and the disposition he



has to comply with our advice. In the commencement of the disease, the patient can generally be cured, if proper means be employed. But when the structure of the organs becomes implicated, it is needless to expect a cure, and our treatment must be wholly palliative.

Treatment - This varies considerably, according to the stage of the disease, you may recall to mind. If the disease be yet in the first stage, the exhibition of an emetic to remove the irritating contents of the stomach, and prepare the system for other remedies, will first claim attention. For this purpose Ipecacuanha is the best article. It will sometimes require repetition, which may be known by the distress of stomach incident to this disease; but emetics should



not to be employed without discrimination, as they are one of the causes of this disorder. Next we recur to laxatives, or mild purgatives. I shall mention only a few of the most prominent remedies of this class, assuming it useless to enumerate all the articles which have been, and may be employed. All the saline and drastic purgatives must be avoided; to the latter Rhubarb furnishes an exception. It, however, is liable to one objection, which is, that it leaves the bowels with a tendency to constipation. But if we should wish to use it, this objection may be obviated, by combining with it, Castor-oil or Magnesia.

If there be torpor in the Anus, which may be known by a sense of oppression after eating, an infusion of two drachms





of lemon, and one of Gentian, in a pint, of boiling water, with another well. The dose is a wine-glassful, just in anticipation of the dyspepsia.

A combination of Læ Sulphuris, and calcined Magnesia in equal proportions, is an excellent laxative in Dyspepsia. To these laxatives, I shall add Mead's pills, the purgative psuedos, and equal quantities of Aloe and Asafœtida combined. These are the most important laxatives, for a common case of Dyspepsia. Their end is, to keep the bowels open; and the one best adapted to the particular case, should be employed.

The next step in the treatment of this disease, is the exhibition of Tonics. None of the vegetable kingdom, are the Odassa, Root Gentian, Edumti, and the



Per-bark. The last of these cortices, had at one time an unrivalled reputation in this disease, but it is now less prescribed, than either of the above mentioned articles. When it is employed, it is given either in tincture, Decoction or infusion; the last of which, is best, aided by some aromatic, particularly orange peel.

The Stop and Quapia are very useful articles; the former of which, is particularly suited to the cases of Anemia.

The Mineral tonics seem to possess much more efficacy in this disease, than the vegetable. Among them, the preparations of Iron, hold the first place. The carbonate is most commonly employed, but it is inferior in point of efficacy, to the sulphate. The former is given in the dose of ten grains, with a small portion of Jergon.



and the latter, of two or three grains, made into pills. The Phosphate of Iron may be given in the same dose, and under the same circumstances as the Sulphate. The Mercurated tincture of Iron is also employed, in the dose of from ten, to twenty drops. These are the remedies for the management of a simple case of Dyp. pupilla. But, in the progress of the disease, several symptoms occur, as before mentioned, which are painful in themselves, and aggravate considerably, the general disease. The management of them, must, of course, be subservient to the general plan of treatment.

Of the symptoms alluded to, I shall treat of cardialgia first. It consists in a burning sensation of the stomach, popularly denominated heartburn. It arises



very frequently from acidity of the stomach; and is very frequently relieved by emetics, though they must be used with caution. The alkaline and absorbent medicines are those commonly employed for its relief; such as Potash, Soda, and Ammonia, either in their pure, or carbonated states, together with prepared Chalk, or Oyster shells, Magnesia, and lime water. This last medicine is very frequently prescribed, and its efficacy generally known. A domestic remedy has been employed with considerable success, and has the reputation of curing one of our most distinguished Medical individuals. My allusion is to the ley procured from hickory ashes. The time of taking is immediately after each meal; as at any other time





it is very disagreeable. A super-carbonated preparation of Potash called Sal Aratus has lately been employed with considerable success, in the dose of a tea spoonful in Chloric acid. The vegetable acids are said to possess efficacy in this particular case.

Dist of Gastralgia. This consists of painful spasms of the stomach. The remedies employed for immediate relief, are Opium, Ether, Musk, Spirits of Sassafras, Oil of Amber, and, in short, all that class of remedies denominated Antispasmodics; among which Opium is the most effectual. The remedies employed in the mean time, to prevent the occurrence of the paroxysms, are, the Spiritus Propiaticus, Marmelade cordiale, Spirit of Turpentine, and the Oxide of Bismuth.



Connected with gastrodynia, is, sometimes, a distressing degree of flatulence; but the remedies for that symptom, will be sufficient for both. When flatulence occurs independently of gastrodynia, we give Carminatives as pabulums, and to do away the tendency to it, Chlor. of Vitriol alone, or, Combined with Per. Bark. When it follows eating with a sense of load and oppression, a dry pile of Spicacuanha composed of two grains, given directly after eating, answers a very good purpose.

Pyrosis. Although this is considered by some as a distinct disease, yet, it is sometimes, undoubtedly, arising from and connected with Dyspepsia.

That particular kind of pyrosis that I shall treat of, seems to depend on an altered secretion of the stomach.



This is to be managed by Emetics when the discharge is copious, to be followed by Antacids, such as lime water and milk, the alkaline, and antacid preparations. Oil of Amber, Spirit of Turpentine, and Oxide of Bismuth may also be employed.

Palpitations. This, although it may arise from other causes, is a very troublesome attendant on Angina pectoris.

Besides this disease, it may arise from aneurism of the heart or great blood vessels, from an enlarged pancreas, from a tumour at the root of the mesentery, and finally, from water in the Chest, particularly in the pericardium. It is sometimes exceedingly difficult to determine when it arises from Dyspepsia. But the most correct Diagnosis will be founded upon the history of the case.



The remedies, are, antacids, and antispasmodics, such as formerly mentioned.

There is still another very distressing symptom connected with this disease.

My allusion is, to the sick-headache. The means of managing it, are Emetics, which are sometimes very effectual, Absorbents, Alkalies, and Opium.

Lemon or lime juice in the dose of a tablespoonful answers well. To these may be added, a tumbler full of hard cider. When there is excitement in the system, the subtraction of a few ounces of blood, is indispensable.

Dyspepsia is sometimes so firmly established by time, as to resist all the preceding remedies. Consisting, as it does, of a wrong action of the stomach, producing a vitiated secretion of the gastric liquor,





Mercury will be found to be the most of  
 fictitious remedy. It should be given in mi-  
 nute doses alone, or combined with Opium,  
 nuxba and Opium. Or the blue pile  
 may be given as recommended by Mr.  
 Abernethy. When Mercury fails, or is  
 disagreeable, the Nitro-Mercuric acid  
 may be used internally and externally  
 as a substitute. The Iodine is re-  
 commended with the same view, under  
 similar circumstances.

It has also been proposed by Wilson Phil-  
 ip, to apply galvanism, for the purpose  
 of reuniting the nerves. The suggestion  
 is an ingenious one, and may lead, one  
 day, to an important mitigation of the  
 sufferings connected with this, and per-  
 haps other diseases. He has proven,  
 I think, by his experiments, that



Galvanism is identical with the nervous fluid. They are of such a nature, and conducted in such a manner, as to leave no doubt with me, on the subject. It has been said, however, in objection to this theory, that his experiments do not necessarily prove the identity of the nervous fluid and galvanism, because, the latter may be the stimulant only, of the former. This to me appears inconceivable; for, in order that there should be a reaction, (of the gastric liquor for example,) it is necessary for two things only, to exist. 1. A power to act. 2. a susceptibility on the part of the stomach to its action. All will agree, I suppose, that the nervous fluid is the power that acts. If, then, the nervous fluid have access to the stomach, an action must ensue, without the ad-



action of any stimulant; and if it have not, no stimulant can excite it to act on a part, with which it is totally disconnected. The very idea, of having a stimulant, to produce an action between an agent, and a part susceptible to the action of that agent, is, to me, preposterous. From the known potency of the imponderable fluids, and their existence throughout all matter, I do not hesitate to declare, as my belief, that correct physiological opinions, will be founded upon facts, with which Heat, Light, and Electricity, are intimately connected.

I have now finished the treatment of the first stage of Dyspepsia, both in its simple, and complicated forms.

The second stage, being essentially different in its character from the first, the



one being inflammatory, and the other Nervous) the treatment, of course, varies considerably. Tonics must be thrown aside, and the antiphlogistic treatment strictly attended to. Small and repeated bloodlettings, purgatives of a saline nature in minute doses, and Opuscula in doses so small as not to nauseate, must be employed. If these means fail, we must add Mercury, or use it alone, with a blister to the Epigastric region, and a daily regulated diet. Phlebotomy is mostly successful. The Nitro-Muriatic acid, and the Sarsaparilla, may be used as substitutes for Mercury, if required. When the inflammation of the second stage is subdued, the case must be treated, principally, as a case of the first stage. The cases of Drunkards, are to be treated





with Opium, Stimulants, Garlic, Assafoetida, and cordial nourishment, in the first stage, and in the second, by those depletory measures, before mentioned, for the management of the second stage of Dyspepsia. It must not be forgotten, that they bear dejection, with considerable inconvenience.

When organic derangement of the stomach takes place, our treatment must consist substantially, of Opium, or some other narcotic -

Diet. We come now, to a very important part, in the management of Dyspepsia, without the concurrence of which, all other means must prove abortive. Of all the articles that a dyspeptic patient can use, that of Milk, is probably the most benificent. It in fact has cured the disease itself. It ought



to be fresh from the bowels. But if it should disagree with the patient, Chocolate may be substituted, always keeping the bowels of the temper. If this also should prove disagreeable, weak Black-tea, aided by some solid food, such as, tender bits of Mutton, or beef, may be used. If the stomach be debilitated, beef, Mutton, common fowls, turkey, oysters slightly cooked, game, of most kinds, such as, pheasants, partridges, venison, &c may be eaten with advantage. Coffee, green tea, pork, veal, lamb, ducks, geese, and fish, are also admissible. To these may be added, soups of all kinds, cakes, and toasts. As little sugitable matter as possible should be used; though Rice, and roasted potatoes, may occasionally be employed, in small quantities. The bread used, should

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The first part of the book is devoted to a  
general account of the history of the  
country, from the earliest times to the  
present. It is written in a clear and  
concise style, and is well illustrated  
by numerous maps and diagrams.  
The second part of the book is devoted  
to a description of the natural history  
of the country, and is also well  
illustrated by numerous maps and  
diagrams. The third part of the book  
is devoted to a description of the  
human history of the country, and is  
also well illustrated by numerous  
maps and diagrams. The fourth part  
of the book is devoted to a description  
of the present state of the country, and  
is also well illustrated by numerous  
maps and diagrams. The fifth part of  
the book is devoted to a description of  
the future of the country, and is also  
well illustrated by numerous maps and  
diagrams. The book is a valuable  
work, and is well worth reading.

be stews; or, if the patient prefer them, he may use bran bread, or crackers.

In the second stage, the diet should consist wholly of demulcents. These are the articles of diet to be employed; but there are yet some circumstances connected with this exhibition, which demand attention. 1. The patient should eat little at a time, and frequently. 2. The diet should be as simple as possible, consisting wholly of one kind. 3. Very little drink ought to be taken at meals. 4. The food should be well chewed. 5. The patient ought not to smell the food, and for that reason should eat it cold. 6. The food ought not to be mashed, as it will be swallowed without the proper mixture of saliva. 7. A small quantity of food should be placed before the



patient at a time, for fear of disgust-  
ing him.

In regard to drinks, water is the  
most suitable. Old porter may be used  
sometimes, but it is not generally benefi-  
cial. Wine of all sorts, is pernicious.  
Rhenish and water may be used sometimes,  
in small quantities, but it is more  
particularly suited, to the cases of  
Arenkards. In the second stage, ~~nothing~~  
but water or demulcents should be  
used.

In old and obstinate cases, the employ-  
ment of the cold and warm baths, fric-  
tions, and exercises, is of the production of  
immense utility. The bath may be used  
two or three times a week, medicated or  
not, according to circumstances. Frictions  
may be employed once every day, the





ordinary manner is, to rub half an hour, or more, the whole body, with fine Argemone, till it creates a universal glow. He again to Exercise, two general rules may be laid down, which ought never to be transgressed. The first is, not to exercise so as to bring on fatigue, and the second not to exercise at all, for two hours after each meal, or with an empty stomach. The most important modes of exercising, are swimming, sailing, walking, and riding, and the one best adapted to the particular case, should be employed.

The clothing of the patient should be warm, consisting for the most part, of Stannous the stockings should be worn, and dusted with pepper, always keeping in mind the pernicious effects of cold feet. All our Remedies failing, we should



our patients freely, & the Saratoga Springs, they being laxative, and secondly, to those of Ballston, they being tonic.

But in vain will we attempt to cure Dyspepsia, if the patient do not studiously avoid all the remote, and exciting causes. This will, perhaps, be the most difficult part of the treatment, as the disease generally commences at an age, when the habits of man are so confirmed, as to be almost assimilated with his nature. But we must impress strongly on the patient's mind, the penalty of transgression, and the necessary renunciation of his former scheme of life, to the condemnation of a perfect cure.

